

Regional Activities

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Introduction

The vast landscape of the Nation results in complex, interrelated, natural resource use and conservation issues that are best addressed through holistic science solutions. In FY 2000, the USGS strengthened its Regional Directorates to better plan and implement programmatic activities on the regional and local levels. The location of bureau leadership and programs closer to customers and their issues, supported by a National Research Council evaluation and endorsed by the Administration, facilitates a citizen-centered approach to providing science where it is needed. It also encourages and strengthens lines of communication across the breadth of USGS programs and with DOI bureaus and other stakeholders at the regional level. USGS Regional Directors are responsible for ensuring that science priorities are balanced and reflect local, regional, and national needs. Early accomplishments of this regional approach include:

- Improved responsiveness to understanding the science needs of DOI bureaus and other stakeholders;
- An increased number of partnerships with DOI bureaus and other stakeholders;
- An improved ability to meet “on-the-ground” with customers and partners at the local, State, and regional levels and to facilitate interagency stakeholder meetings;

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- The growing ability to access the best resources across the bureau and engage scientists from a variety of disciplines to conduct integrated science for local and regional assessments;
- Establishment of integrated science centers, such as the Alaska Science Center and the Florida Integrated Science Center, to facilitate collaborative and integrated science and improve operational practices;
- Innovative approaches to resource sharing and co-location that increase cost efficiencies and science dialog among disciplines;
- Implementing the President's Management Agenda by conducting competitive sourcing inventories and executing FAIR Act policy.
- Establishment of Regional Geographic Information offices to facilitate Department and Bureau information technology computer security strategies and to improve delivery of USGS science to customers.

With oversight of hundreds of field locations across the Nation, USGS Regional Directors ensure that USGS provides immediate consultation, cooperation, and communication to deliver science information where it is needed. The science conducted across the Nation to address societal issues is determined by the many demographic factors and geographic features unique to each Region, as well as the scientific needs of partners and customers, including DOI bureaus; Federal, State, and local agencies; non-governmental organizations; and universities. The USGS works closely with these partners to understand issues and provide solutions that address the resource and management needs of these partners. These issues address topics that are timely, on-the-ground, and sensitive where scientists and managers are closer to the problems. Some of the issues and accomplishments represent integrated science; other issues or accomplishments are better addressed through single disciplines. The regional directorates are positioned to integrate a management approach to science, where appropriate, to ensure that appropriate level of scientific expertise is available to work with partners on common issues. The relationships with these partners provide unique opportunities to leverage USGS resources and science that not only benefit the immediate partners and customers of USGS but also enable the USGS to apply the results of these efforts to address similar issues in the future. In this way, the USGS can use the results of scientific efforts to help land and resource managers address similar problems across the landscape while making efficient use of resources.

Crosscuts

As the Department of the Interior's science bureau, the USGS participates in numerous intra-departmental and interagency crosscutting activities, primarily to ensure that sound science is available to assist decisionmakers in the profoundly complex issues being addressed. These crosscutting activities range from environmental issues such as the Everglades restoration and coral reef protection in the Pacific Islands to resource management issues such as salmon recovery in the Pacific Northwest. In each instance, USGS science provides the unbiased information needed by land and resource managers to make the most educated decisions regarding their trust responsibilities. The following table provides a list of the crosscutting activities in which the USGS plays a prominent role and identifies where in these justifications may be found a description of the USGS participation.

Crosscutting Activity	Funding Estimates
Greater Everglades Ecosystem Restoration MRSGI: Geographic Analysis and Monitoring (p. 151) GHRP: Earth Surface Dynamics (p. 206) WRI: Hydrologic Research and Development (p. 295); Toxic Substances Hydrology (p. 286) BR: Biological Research and Monitoring (p. 345)	FY 2002, \$8.6 million FY 2003, \$8.6 million FY 2004, \$12.6 million
Columbia River Basin Salmon Recovery BR: Biological Research and Monitoring (p. 345)	FY 2002, \$0.51 million FY 2003, \$0.51 million FY 2004, \$0.51 million
Invasive Species BR: Biological Research and Monitoring (p. 345)	FY 2002, \$7.8 million FY 2003, \$7.3 million FY 2004, \$10.4 million
Coral Reef Protection GHRP: Coastal and Marine Geology (p. 219) BR: Biological Research and Monitoring (p. 345)	FY 2002, \$3.5 million FY 2003, \$3.5 million FY 2004, \$3.5 million
CALFED Bay-Delta MRSGI: Geographic Analysis and Monitoring (p. 151) WRI: Hydrologic Research and Development (p. 295); Toxic Substances Hydrology (p. 286) BR: Biological Research and Monitoring (p. 345)	FY 2002, \$1.5 million FY 2003, \$1.5 million FY 2004, \$1.5 million
Maintaining America's Heritage Facilities (p. 421)	FY 2002, \$36 million FY 2003, \$32 million FY 2004, \$33 million
Klamath River Basin WRI: Hydrologic Networks and Analysis (p. 309); Cooperative Water Program (p. 318) BR: Biological Research and Monitoring (p. 345)	FY 2002, \$0.92 million FY 2003, \$0.92 million FY 2004, \$0.92 million
Fire Science MRSGI: Geographic Analysis and Monitoring (p. 151)	FY 2002, \$2.8 million FY 2003, \$0 FY 2004, \$0
Global Change MRSGI: Geographic Analysis and Monitoring (p. 151) GHRP: Earth Surface Dynamics (p. 206) WRI: Hydrologic Networks and Analysis (p. 309) BR: Biological Research and Monitoring (p. 345)	FY 2002, \$29.9 million FY 2003, \$29.9 million FY 2004, \$30.1 million

Science on the DOI Landscape

New directions for the Regions in FY 2004 focus on a closer interaction of regional and programmatic expertise to meet high-priority science needs of the DOI bureaus at the regional levels. The USGS is requesting \$3 million for the Science on the DOI Landscape initiative, in which the Regions would collaborate with DOI bureaus to identify science issues and with the disciplines to provide scientific expertise and contacts to help address these issues. Resulting accomplishments would fulfill both regional science needs and programmatic goals. Criteria for selecting projects would be based primarily on DOI priorities identified through meetings, workshops, and other interactions, as well as on funding availability, multi-bureau partnership opportunities, work that builds on past and current science activities, answers that can be applied to multiple landscapes, and meeting urgent needs with "tactical science." Based on current knowledge of these priorities, the USGS would focus on studies that address regional issues described below.

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In the Eastern Region (ER), science activities would focus on environmental and human impacts on ecosystems. Impacts of sea-level rise on low-elevation coastal habitats, effects of urban dynamics on the sustainability of inner city public lands, and ecosystem sustainability studies on impacts of altered freshwater flow on bay and coral reef health are critical issues for both the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the National Park Service (NPS). The ER would work with FWS and the NPS, as well as the appropriate programs, to determine projects that address these issues.

Central Region priority projects would address issues of invasive species in riparian and aquatic habitats to aid FWS, NPS, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and Bureau of Reclamation (BOR); restoration ecology to assist FWS, BLM, BOR, and NPS in developing interdisciplinary strategies to restore habitats affected by fire, abandoned mines, or energy extraction; coalbed methane production on public lands (BLM); and assessment and modeling of groundwater resources at regional scales for BOR, FWS, BLM, and NPS.

In the Western Region (WR), science activities would focus on integrated issues in key areas of Alaska, the Great Basin, the arid west, and the Pacific Islands. Projects on the North Slope of Alaska would focus on energy development-related physical and biological issues to provide science information on management decisions that face BLM and FWS. In the Great Basin, ecosystem sustainability depends on results of interactions of wildfire and invasive species as well as on impacts of geothermal development. Water continues to be a critical issue for BOR and FWS in the arid part of WR where there is a need to develop a clearer understanding of instream needs for aquatic life and improved ability to forecast possible scenarios. The Hawaiian Islands face invasions of exotic species and decline of coral reefs, important issues for FWS and NPS.

The following sections describe the unique natures of each of the USGS Regions and the science that the USGS conducts therein to address issues of concern to Departmental and other Federal, State, and local agencies, as well as non-governmental entities and the general public. Each regional section includes a description of the most significant issues facing that Region, the major partnerships in which the USGS participates to address these issues, and selected accomplishments demonstrating the value of the products and services the USGS provides to these partners and customers.